

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 27, 2006

The Honorable R. James Nicholson  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue N.W.  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Nicholson:

In the past decade, several government studies have revealed a geographic shift in the veterans' population. While nationally the veterans' population is declining, veterans have migrated from northeastern and midwestern states to southeastern and southwestern, which offsets the decline in these states.

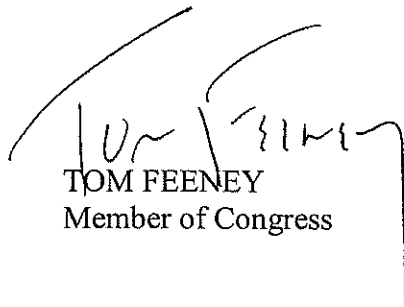
However, the present funding formula used to allocate funds for VA facilities has not been accurately amended to reflect these shifts. In the past, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has based facility-funding allocation primarily on past funding levels and where the veteran originally enlisted, rather than considering facility usage and current local veteran population.

For example, one midwestern city has four VA hospitals, yet many of the inpatient facilities are underutilized. A main reason for this is the significant decline of the veterans' population. In the state of Florida, the veterans' population has seen explosive growth and, as a result, many local VA facilities are struggling to maintain appropriate levels of care.

We must correct the current deficiencies found in the VA funding formula by placing greater emphasis on allocating resources to reflect geographic changes in the veterans' population. By restructuring the funding formula in this manner, we will be able to better serve the men and women who served the cause of freedom.

cc: Chairman Steven Buyer

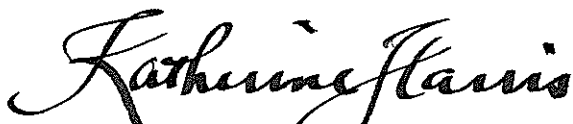
Sincerely,



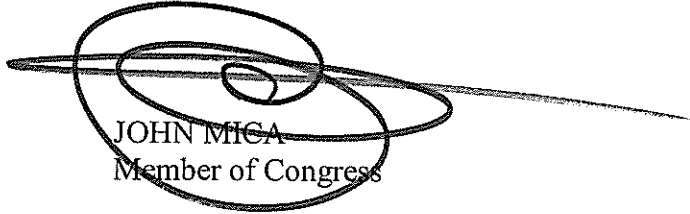
TOM FEENEY  
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JIM DAVIS  
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KATHERINE HARRIS  
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JOHN MICA  
Member of Congress



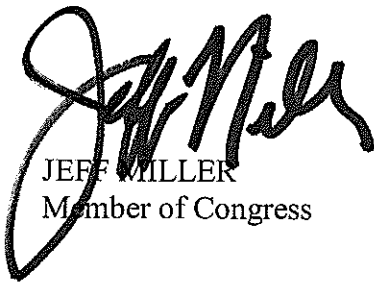
MARK FOLEY  
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